



New England includes many ecosystems that, by virtue of their ecological value, recreational value, or proximity to large populations, hold a special significance to us. EPA - New England is focusing particular attention and resources on these special places. Working closely with our federal, state and local partners, these community-based initiatives are delivering tangible environmental improvements to these areas.

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Fact Sheet/March 2000

# Pawcatuck River Watershed

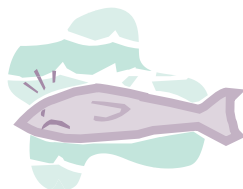


## What Makes The Pawcatuck River Watershed Special?

- Spans 194,000 acres over 14 towns in southwestern RI and southeastern CT; remarkably rural — 70% forested, habitat for 70% of RI's globally rare species and 65% of state's rare species and unique natural communities.
- Forests and wetlands support high diversity, sensitive to human disturbance.
- Home of Narragansett Tribe and the highest concentration of turf (sod) farms in the U.S.

## Why Does The Pawcatuck River Need Special Attention?

- Development pressures are among the highest in New England. Suburbanization and nonpoint pollution threaten resources, farms, open space and 'country way of life.'
- Stream withdrawals to irrigate golf courses and turf crops may threaten quantity and quality of water resources and natural habitats.
- Aquifer is 'sole source' of drinking water, as designated by EPA.



## Progress/Goals for the Future

### What Progress Has Been Made?

- Funding obtained for major efforts in: water use availability, tools for towns managing growth and for preserving important 'green' spaces.
- Broad partnerships, technical assistance, etc.
- DEM/EPA produced the 1998 water quality map.
- EPA funded resource projects, stream teams, and wetland mapping projects.

### What Are The Major Actions Planned For 2000?

- Continue assessment on quantity of water and stream flow in Queen-Usquepaug basin.
- Finalize local tools and materials on unique land use techniques for managing growth.
- Work with towns to map natural and cultural resources, farms, etc., for green space plan.
- Educate local officials on town and watershed resources, and assist in revising comprehensive plans, ordinances, etc.

### What is the Pawcatuck Initiative and the PWP?

The initiative was started in 1996 when groups met to discuss their concerns. A community-based effort was launched to keep up the dialog and established the Pawcatuck Watershed Partnership (PWP) to:

- Improve local tools for managing growth.
- Preserve farm, forest, open space, and critical natural resources.
- Sustain business vitality, farming, and tourism.
- Encourage local management across towns.

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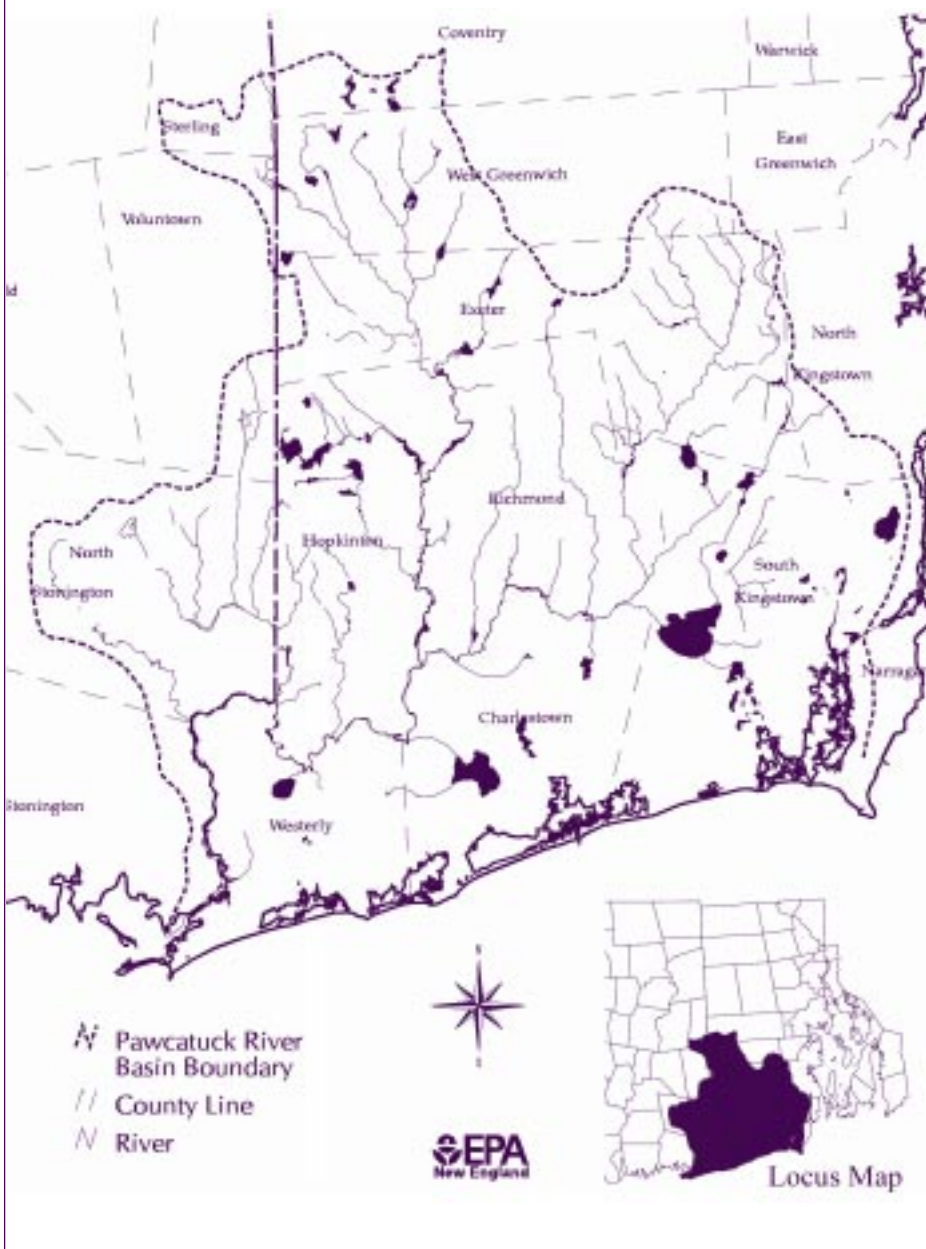
Watersheds

## Who Are The Partners?

EPA-New England • Southern Rhode Island Conservation District • Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association • 14 Towns in Pawcatuck Watershed • Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management • Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection • Rural Lands Coalition • Salt Pond Coalition • The Nature Conservancy • USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service • US Geologic Survey • URI Cooperative Extension Service • Trout Unlimited • Audubon Society of Rhode Island • Narragansett Indian Tribe • URI Coastal Resources Center • URI Watershed Watch • Mashantucket Pequot Tribe • Rhode Island Geographic Information Systems • The Rhode Island Natural History Survey

## ► Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association Contact

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Note: EPA-New England offers businesses and municipalities information and assistance to improve compliance with environmental laws and be better stewards of their local environment. Please call to learn how EPA can help.